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Letter dated 17 May 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 14 May 2001, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

01-37637 (E) 170501

Annex

Letter dated 14 May 2001 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to inform you of the decision taken today by the North Atlantic Council authorizing me to direct the Kosovo Force (KFOR) Commander (COMKFOR) to allow the controlled return of Yugoslav forces into Sector B of the ground safety zone (GSZ). This may commence on 24 May 2001, subject to COMKFOR's "Notice of Intent". I will closely monitor the implementation of the return, particularly concerning the move into each sub-sector. The Council remains seized of the issue and will provide any further guidance as appropriate.

In taking this decision, the Council has noted the report of my Personal Representative, Pieter Feith, on his latest mission to the region, as well as military advice on the situation. The allies have also noted the proposals of the Yugoslav and Serbian authorities on key capacity-building measures contained in the "Outline of the Plan for the Joint Security Forces (JSF) Entry into the GSZ Sector Bravo" and further assurances contained in letters sent by Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Covic on 4 and 13 May 2001.

I have written to Dr. Covic recalling that the North Atlantic Council firmly expects the continued implementation of confidence-building measures. In particular, I underlined the necessity for a public announcement, prior to the return of Yugoslav forces, of an appropriate amnesty for those individuals who voluntarily disarm. This is a key issue, which will be taken into account in the process of return.

I also recalled the need for the returning forces to respect fundamental human rights and international humanitarian law. In addition, I stressed the need to continue to deploy only troops under his strict political control, and to avoid any excessive use or show of force. These concerns will also be included in COMKFOR's "Notice of Intent". Lastly, I emphasized the need for a comprehensive information campaign announcing the Yugoslav authorities' overall approach and continuing implementation of confidence-building measures to the local population.

I am encouraged by the constructive attitude displayed by Dr. Covic during his meetings with Mr. Feith last week. It would appear that Dr. Covic is aware of the need to minimize the risk of violence after the re-entry of the Yugoslav forces into Sector B. As proposed by Mr. Feith and agreed with the ethnic Albanian side, I encouraged him to press ahead with the demilitarization of two villages in Sector B, Lucane and Turia. There was also agreement to set up an initial capability for a multi-ethnic police force with the assistance of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I expressed the hope that the plan for the return of Yugoslav forces will take into account the prospect of an initial deployment of this multi-ethnic police force.

The return of the Yugoslav forces into Sector B will complete the phased and conditioned reduction of the ground safety zone, to which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had committed itself as a contribution to achieving a peaceful solution to the problems of southern Serbia. The normalization of the situation will help regional security and the newly democratic government of Yugoslavia, as well as help in the realization of the legitimate rights of the local population through political means.

(*Signed*) Lord **Robertson** of Port Ellen